

APPARATUS AND METHODS FOR FOLDING A NONBONDED NONWOVEN WEB

Abstract of the Disclosure

Apparatus and methods for folding a nonwoven web without mechanical contact against a folding surface. A first portion of the nonwoven web is secured to a collector by vacuum and a positive pressure differential is applied to a second portion of the moving nonwoven web. An unbalanced lifting force applied by the positive pressure differential causes the first portion to fold along a longitudinal fold line extending in a machine direction and to assume an overlapping relationship with the second portion. The vacuum assists in the folding process and maintains the overlapping relationship until the nonbonded nonwoven web is consolidated. One or more elastic strands or bands may be captured in the space defined between the overlapped first and second portions.